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AUTHOR	Reimer, Catherine Swan
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ABSTRACT

Successful counseling interventions and treatment depend on understanding the worldview of the people to whom services are offered. This book provides culturally specific information about the Inupiat worldview of "personal well-being" as a basis for establishing counseling strategies. This perspective is obtained through interviews with 25 Inupiat elders and residents from Point Hope, Kivalina, Kotzebue, and Anchorage (Alaska). The Inupiat define well-being by sharing Inupiat words and their meanings in relation to well-being. In their worldview, the way one thinks and acts can have an effect on well-being and on the environment. A reciprocal relationship is formed through proper thinking and conduct, especially in the act of sharing. From the elders' perspective, good parenting and community support guide children to form a positive view of the self and their relationship to the community. What the Inupiat want from counselors is described in their own words. Chapters cover: historical background; Inupiat descriptions and words for personal well-being; the effect of thinking and proper conduct on one's personal well-being; taking responsibility for one's well-being; sociological factors affecting well-being; village healers; what every counselor should know; strategies to help the Inupiat people; beliefs about the environment; the importance of sharing; and beliefs about the whale (reciprocal relationship and the spiritual bond between the community and the whale). Appendices present the Inupiat value system, demographic information on the interviewees, and a map of Alaska. (Contains 110 references and an index.) (TD)

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